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Dockets Management Branch
Food & Drug Administration
Department of Health & Human Services
12420 Parklawn Drive, Room 1-23
Rockville, MD 20857

Re: Docket #98P-0203/CP

Dear FDA:

The commercially-motivated practice of forced molting - deliberately starving laying hens for 5 to 14 days straight - is used by the U.S. egg industry to control egg supplies and prices. Abruptly deprived of all food, the hens go into physiologic shock, lose their feathers, and stop laying eggs for about two months. Many die. The egg industry hides under the protective cover of "standard agricultural practice." The public is kept uninformed.

There are many people, like me, who believe that chickens and all poultry deserve to be treated, at a minimum, with some measure of dignity. However, aside from the cruelty issue, researchers are now finding that forced molting results in dramatically higher levels of *Salmonella Enteritidis*. Grade A shell eggs are the most common source of this infection in humans.

It is time to preserve the health of consumers by protecting the well-being of laying hens. Please grant the petition filed under #98P-0203/CP and ban forced molting, based on documentation that starving the hens wrecks their immune systems resulting in *Salmonella Enteritidis* bacterial poisoning of the hens and their eggs.

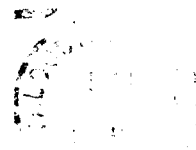
Sincerely yours,



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